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CURRENT SERIAL RECORDS

OUTDOOR RECREATION

MD 30204

ON THE NATION'S FARMLAND

A New Product of Agriculture

Outdoor recreational opportunities on the Nation's privately-owned farm, ranch and woodlands, which comprise nearly three-fourths of our land area, are virtually unlimited.

Many farmers and landowners have already found recreation to be a new and profitable farm crop. Land formerly in grain is now meeting the needs of fisherman, hunters, campers, hikers, and others who seek the out-of-doors.

The new farm enterprises range from a few acres for picnicking and camping to watershed lakes of several hundred acres. The crops harvested include fish, ducks, mink, muskrat, pheasants and quail. The recreational areas established are ideal for swimming, camping, boating, hiking, and nature study.

Some farmers are turning to recreation as an alternate use for cropland. They realize our farms are producing more food and fiber than we can use at home and market abroad. Some of the acres producing surplus crops are already meeting the needs of outdoor recreation. Many, many more can be profitably converted to such use.

The cover photograph shows a scene on the Paul Pearson farm in Montgomery County, Maryland, a 250-acre tract now used primarily as a wildlife area for controlled hunting.

A Los Banos, California, farmer operates a commercial duck hunting club as part of his dairy ranch. He has 660 acres of grazing land that has been developed into a waterfowl habitat. The farmer built 27 blinds. He rents them for \$10 a day to hunters and allows hunting three days a week during the season.

Farmers in Fayette County, Georgia, who own farm ponds ranging from one to 75 acres in size, publish a yearly fisherman's guide of fishing spots within the county. Ponds are stocked with bluegill, bream, bass, crappie, and catfish. Owners charge \$1 a day for fishing. They also rent boats and sell annual permits for \$25 to \$35. There are more than 320 acres of farm ponds in the county.

In Pope County, Minnesota, a farmer built a dam with the assistance of the Soil Conservation Service in 1957 to flood 139 acres of land to increase mink production. He also sells duck hunting rights for \$4 a day. His return has been 18 percent on his total investment.

In Illinois a Kankakee County farmer took a long look at the hunting problem and decided he could profitably devote a sizable portion of his land to raising ringnecked pheasants to supply controlled hunting areas.

A New Product of Agriculture

He bought a hatchery in a nearby town and moved the incubators to his farm. He now hatches 50,000 pheasant chicks, 10,000 Mallard ducks and thousands of quail each year. He raises about 10,000 pheasants a year and sells them to private hunting clubs. The others he ships off newly hatched as far away as Hawaii to farmers and ranchers interested in the same business.

In Virginia, a landowner in the South River Watershed developed recreational facilities around two of the watershed lakes on his property. He built roads, brought in electric lines, and sold lots for cottages. He developed a large area for campers who pay a fee for camping, swimming, and hunting privileges.

A Texas farmer has developed the area around a seven acre pond on his farm for boating, water skiing, picnicking and camping on a fee basis. The owner manages and maintains the recreation area in conjunction with his farming operation.

These are a few of the successful farm recreation enterprises. There are many others. The need for more is great. There are opportunities for thousands of such developments throughout the Nation. The average American family prefers simple recreational pleasures like hiking, swimming, and fishing. Elaborate facilities are not needed to meet these preferences. A well tended woodland with picnic tables or a well stocked pond or a lake is all that is needed, plus imagination. Facilities of this kind can be constructed within easy reach of most people -- satisfying rural and urban residents alike.



Many farm ponds and small watershed reservoirs are open to the public for fishing at a small daily fee. An enterprising farmer in Franklin County, Arkansas, uses the honor system to collect fishing fees. Recreation on farmland isn't restricted to summertime activities. Children pictured below skate on a Massachusetts farm pond. ARK 62,204 and MASS 198.





Opportunities are unlimited for developing recreation areas around lakes formed through the Department of Agriculture's Small Watershed Program. Thousands of these small lakes, like the one pictured in the Old Tom Creek Watershed in Illinois, offer opportunities for swimming, fishing, boating and camping. ILL-2049.

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An Oklahoma rancher shows a string of fish caught in one of the 24 reservoirs on the Sandstone Creek Watershed project. Watershed projects stabilize farmland and prevent floods and add recreation opportunities to many water-scarce areas. OKLA 11,808.



Boy Scouts make excellent use of the camping area on the Joe Lesoing farm near Sprague, Nebraska. The area around a farm pond was converted for camping and picnicking by the owner. NEB 2063.



In the summer, children and adults swim in this Clarion County, Pennsylvania, farm pond. In the winter, they ice skate there. PA 980.

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